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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry
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WASHINGTON NEWSLETTER

(For Administrative Use Only)

TO : DIRECTORS, REGIONAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES

FROM : CHIEF OF THE BUREAU

Budget Hearing -- Representatives of our staff appeared before the Bureau of the Budget October 13 in support of estimates for fiscal year 1950. Mr. Speh, Dr. Irving, and Mr. Donovan attended with me. The hearing seemed to go rather smoothly and we feel that our case was favorably received. . . . A significant point emphasized by the Budget Bureau representatives is the importance of the Regional Laboratories' fulfilling the purpose for which they were established -- that is, promoting new and wider uses (primarily industrial) for agricultural commodities. Our telephone request to you of October 14, asking for statements on this matter, was a result of the Wednesday hearing. . . . Mr. Sam Broadbent of the Budget staff made an interesting inquiry as to what lines of work had been initiated at the Southern Laboratory as a result of information acquired by Dr. Scott on his trip to Europe last year. He also raised the question of the large surplus of cotton and asked what the Southern Laboratory had been able to do in its research that might be of importance in using substantial quantities of this surplus cotton.

Washington Staff Advised of Administrative Changes -- At a meeting October 14 of all Washington staff members of the Bureau, I outlined the plan for reorganizing and streamlining administrative procedures, including the placing of responsibility on Directors for all work within their regions and the readjustment here in Washington whereby staff members will report to Assistant Chiefs instead of directly to the Chief of the Bureau. This policy statement to the Washington staff was in exact accord with the plan as decided upon at the last Directors' meeting.

Conference on Apple Essence Alcohol -- The work at ERRL on recovery of apple essence has encountered an obstacle in the taxable amount of alcohol contained in the concentrated essence. It is hoped that this problem will be only a temporary one. A conference was held October 14 with representatives of the Bureau of Internal Revenue to discuss possibilities of overcoming the difficulty. Satisfactory solution of the problem should permit rapid development of a new large outlet for apples.

Berlin Airlift Stirs Renewed Interest in Food Dehydration -- Judging from requests received by the Bureau for information on methods and equipment for dehydrating foods, it appears that interest in this process is reviving because of the need for reducing weight and volume of foods being flown into Berlin.

Industrial Evaluation of Fungal Amylase -- A memorandum of understanding was signed September 23 with the Grain Processing Corp., Muscatine, Ia., which will permit full-scale industrial evaluation of the fungal amylase method of producing alcohol. NRRL is cooperating in this project.

Wool-Research Contract Being Signed — Signatures are being obtained to the contract for the wool-research project to be conducted by the Textile Research Institute, Princeton, N. J. This work will be sponsored by WRRL. Dr. Harold P. Lundgren of WRRL's Industrial Products Division is subject-matter specialist for the project. Purpose of the investigations is to determine the physical and chemical changes that take place during the aging of wool in various stages of manufacture.

Fortified Candy Hits Front Page — The work on protein-fortified candy at the Agricultural Chemical Research Division in New Orleans made the front pages of the Washington Post and the Times-Herald October 14. It was a United Press dispatch from Chicago and probably appeared also in papers in other cities. The story described (with some over-enthusiasm) the improved candies displayed by the ACR Division in the Bureau's exhibit at the National Chemical Exposition.

Visits of Bureau Chief to Regional Laboratories — Here are my tentative plans for visits to three of the Regional Laboratories:

ERRL — Leave Washington October 25, with Mr. Speh.

SRRL — Leave Washington November 6, return November 17. With Dr. Irving, expect to call at some of the other laboratories in the area on this trip.

WRRL — Leave Washington November 26, return December 10. Included in this trip, also with Dr. Irving, will be visits to Los Angeles and Salinas.

December Meeting of Directors — A special meeting of the Regional Laboratory Directors will be held in Washington for the week beginning December 13. This conference is in addition to the meeting scheduled for the second week in January 1949.

Alcohol Survey — In a meeting to discuss the marketing of alcohol for use as a motor fuel, Mr. Kennedy, Deputy Administrator of the Alcohol Tax Unit, stated that his organization had been requested to make a thorough survey of the alcohol industry -- its capacity, bottlenecks, and storage capacity for grains or molasses. Presumably this survey is being made at the request of the Armed Services or the National Security Resources Board.

Research Manuscripts -- Delegation of authority to approve research manuscripts was discussed with Dr. B. T. Shaw of ARA. This subject will be on the agenda for the next meeting of the ARA Research Council. I have been requested to discuss the problem in BAIC. The meeting will be open for discussion of whether present regulations should be modified to permit approval at a lower level than the Bureau Chief.

G. E. Hilbert
Chief of the Bureau

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